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THE SOCRATES BOOKLETS: XV.

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SELECTIONS FROM B Y R O N

(Born 1788: Died 1824)

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"Socrates. Without any one teaching him he will recover his knowledge for himself, if he is only asked questions"

PLATO, *Meno.*

METHOD OF THE SERIES

This series is intended primarily for boys and girls of thirteen to fifteen. The pupil should first read right through each poem, essay, play or narrative in order to get a general knowledge of the subject-matter, but he may pass over obscure allusions or other difficulties. The whole comes before the part. In order that the teacher may be satisfied that this first reading has been done, a selection of questions is given which should be answered, either aloud or in writing, without the book. These questions are headed "A."

After this comes more detailed and intensive study, but it is important that this should not degenerate into a mere cramming of the memory. The pupil should re-read the whole or parts of his text not in order to "get it up," but in order to find things out. A selection of questions is therefore given which aims at indicating some of the chief things which the pupil should find out if he is to enter into the mind of the writer. These questions, for which the pupil should be allowed the free use of his book, are headed "B."

A few of the questions headed "B" are marked with an asterisk () to indicate that they are intended for older pupils.*

The pupil who, after obtaining a general knowledge of his subject-matter, has employed himself in making intelligent inquiries into it, may then profitably go further afield. For this purpose a selection is given of questions which involve reference to other books. The usefulness of these questions depends partly on the extent to which the pupil has access to the best English classics and to standard works of reference. But the teacher will often have such access even if the pupil has not. In this section again an asterisk () indicates that certain questions are intended for older pupils, and a number has been placed after those where reference is made to one of the books in the list given on the last page of this volume. This third set of questions is headed "C."*

It is hoped that the notes at the end will be of use or interest to adult readers. They are not primarily intended for the pupil.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHILDE HAROLD, I.—ii, iii-xi	I
" " III.—ii, iii, xi-xiv	4
" " III.—cxiii, cxiv	7
" " III.—xxi-xxxiii (Waterloo)	8
" " III.—After iv. (Drachenfels).	12
" " III.—lxxxv-xcvi	14
" " IV.—cxxxviii, cxxix, cxxxix-cxlv (Rome)	18
SONNET ON CHILLON	22
THE PRISONER OF CHILLON	22
From MAZEPPA	36
Incantation (<i>from</i> MANFRED, Act I, Sc. i)	52
SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY	55
OH! SNATCH'D AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM	55
SO WE'LL GO NO MORE AROVING	56
WHEN WE TWO PARTED.	56
THERE BE NONE OF BEAUTY'S DAUGHTERS	57
THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB	59
FARE THEE WELL	60
NAPOLÉON'S FAREWELL	62
STANZAS FOR MUSIC	64
From ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS	65
EPISTLE FROM MR. MURRAY TO DR. POLIDORI	69
EPITAPH FOR WILLIAM PITT	72
STANZAS	72
EPIGRAM	72
DON JUAN, I.—i-viii, xxv, cc-ccv	73
" " II.—xi-xiv, xxv-xxix, xliii-xlvi, xlix-liii, lvi, lviii, lxvii-lxxi	77
" " III.—After lxxxvi (The Isles of Greece)	86
GENERAL QUESTIONS	90
NOTES	91
LIST OF BOOKS SUGGESTED	92

SELECTIONS FROM BYRON

From CHILDE HAROLD, Canto I

Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight ;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And vex'd with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.

* * * * *

Childe Harold was he hight :—but whence his name
And lineage long, it suits me not to say ;
Suffice it, that peichance they were of fame,
And had been glorious in another day :
But one sad losel soils a name for aye,
However mighty in the olden time ;
Nor all that heralds rake from coffin'd clay,
Nor florid prose, nor honied lies of rhyme,
Can blazon evil deeds, or consecrate a crime.

10

Childe Harold bask'd him in the noontide sun,
Disporting there like any other fly,
Nor deem'd before his little day was done
One blast might chill him into misery.
But long ere scarce a third of his pass'd by,
Worse than adversity the Childe befell ;
He felt the fulness of satiety :
Then loathed he in his native land to dwell,
Which seem'd to him more lone than Eremite's sad cell.

20

For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
Had sigh'd to many though he loved but one,
And that loved one, alas ! could ne'er be his.

Ah, happy she ! to 'scape from him whose kiss
Had been pollution unto aught so chaste ;
Who soon had left her charms for vulgar bliss,
And spoil'd her goodly lands to gild his waste, 30
Nor calm domestic peace had ever deign'd to taste.

And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
And from his fellow bacchanals would flee ;
'Tis said, at times the sullen tear would start,
But Pride congeal'd the drop within his ee :
Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie,
And from his native land resolved to go,
And visit scorching climes beyond the sea ;
With pleasure drugg'd, he almost long'd for woe,
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below. 40

The Childe departed from his father's hall ;
It was a vast and venerable pile ;
So old, it seemed only not to fall,
Yet strength was pillar'd in each massy aisle.
Monastic dome ! condemn'd to uses vile !
Where Superstition once had made her den
Now Paphian girls were known to sing and smile ;
And monks might deem their time was come agen,
If ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men.

Yet oft-times in his maddest mirthful mood 50
Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow,
As if the memory of some deadly feud
Or disappointed passion lurk'd below :
But this none knew, nor haply cared to know ;
For his was not that open, artless soul
That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow,
Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
Whate'er this grief mote be, which he could not control.

And none did love him—though to hall and bower
He gather'd revellers from far and near, 60
He knew them flatt'ers of the festal hour ;
The heartless parasites of present cheer.
Yea ! none did love him—not his lemans dear—
But pomp and power alone are woman's care,
And where these are light Eros finds a feere ;
Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare,
And Mammon wins his way where Seraphs might despair.

Childe Harold had a mother—not forgot,
Though parting from that mother he did shun ;
A sister whom he loved, but saw her not 70
Before his weary pilgrimage begun :
If friends he had, he bade adieu to none.
Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel :
Ye, who have known what 't is to dote upon
A few dear objects, will in sadness feel
Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal.

His house, his home, his heritage, his lands,
The laughing dames in whom he did delight,
Whose large blue eyes, fair locks, and snowy hands, 80
Might shake the saintship of an anchorite,
And long had fed his youthful appetite ;
His goblets brimm'd with every costly wine,
And all that mote to luxury invite,
Without a sigh he left to cross the brine,
And traverse Paynim shores, and pass Earth's central line.

QUESTIONS

A.

Sketch briefly Byron's early years, and his character as far as you can gather it.

B.

1. Is there anything remarkable about the language of these opening stanzas ?

2. Is the tone of these opening lines natural or theatrical ? Give examples to justify your opinion. What impression is the poet deliberately trying to give ? Is there a touch of snobbery ?

C.

1. Analyse the metre of the poem. Who first used this stanza and who else has imitated it ? What are its possibilities and how far are they realised here ? ^{3 4 5 11 19 20}

*2. Is the intention implied by the language of these opening stanzas carried out right through *Childe Harold* ?

From CHILDE HAROLD, Canto III

ONCE more upon the waters ! yet once more !
 And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
 That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar !
 Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead !
 Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
 And the rent canvass fluttering strew the gale,
 Still must I on ; for I am as a weed,
 Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail
 Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,
 The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind ;
 Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
 And hear it with me, as the rushing wind
 Sweeps the cloud onwards : in that Tale I find

The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life,—where not a flower appears.

But who can view the ripen'd rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold 20
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex, roll'd
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond prime.

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit 30
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thence was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam; 40
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tone
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
 Till he had peopled them with beings bright
 As their own beams ; and earth, and earth-born jars,
 And human frailties, were forgotten quite :
 Could he have kept his spirit to that flight 50
 He had been happy ; but this clay will sink
 Its spark immortal, envying it the light
 To which it mounts, as if to break the link
 That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

QUESTIONS

A.

What further insight do these lines give into the thoughts of Childe Harold ?

B.

1. What does Byron say about the sea ? Account for his feeling towards it, and show how it fits in with the character he gives himself.

2. How does Nature appeal to Byron ?

3. Illustrate from these stanzas Byron's melancholy, isolation, restlessness, imagination. Are they sincerely and well expressed ?

4. Explain carefully and in detail the meaning of the last stanza.

C.

1. What do you know of the " wandering outlaw of his own dark mind " ? *

*2. Compare Byron's attitude to Nature and to Man with Wordsworth's.^{4, 5}

CHILDE HAROLD, Canto III, cxiii, cxiv

I HAVE not loved the world, nor the world me ;
 I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor bow'd
 To its idolatries a patient knee,—
 Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles,—nor cried aloud
 In worship of an echo ; in the crowd
 They could not deem me one of such ; I stood
 Among them, but not of them ; in a shroud
 Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
 Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me,— 10
 But let us part fair foes ; I do believe,
 Though I have found them not, that there may be
 Words which are things,—hopes which will not deceive,
 And virtues which are merciful, nor weave
 Snares for the failing : I would also deem
 O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve ;
 That two, or one, are almost what they seem,—
 That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream.

QUESTIONS

A.

How does Byron feel towards the world ?

B.

1. Is there any truth in Byron's misanthropy ? Where is it good, where is it bad ?

*2. From these and the preceding stanzas can you discover what the French mean by *le mal du siècle* ? Is it a genuine feeling of world weariness or merely a theatrical pose ?

C.

1. Compare Swift's view of human nature in *Gulliver's Travels*. Which view is the more honest ? *

*2. Find in *Macbeth* the original of "filed my mind." Do Shakespeare's disillusioned characters resemble Byron ? 12

WATERLOO

(Childe Harold, Canto III, xxi-xxxiii)

THERE was a sound of revelry by night,
 And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
 Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
 The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men ;
 A thousand hearts beat happily ; and when
 Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
 Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
 And all went merry as a marriage-bell ;
 But hush ! hark ! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell !

Did ye not hear it ?—No ; 't was but the wind, 10
 Or the car rattling o'er the stony street ;
 On with the dance ! let joy be unconfin'd ;
 No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
 To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
 But, hark !—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
 As if the clouds its echo would repeat ;
 And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before !
 Arm ! arm ! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar !

Within a window'd niche of that high hall
 Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain ; he did hear 20
 That sound the first amidst the festival,
 And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear ;
 And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
 His heart more truly knew that peal too well
 Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
 And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell :
 He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

Ah ! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
 And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
 And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago 30
 Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness ;

And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated ; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise !

And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war ; 40
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar ;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—" The foe ! They come !
they come ! "

And wild and high the " Cameron's gathering " rose !
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes :—
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills, 50
Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears !

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,—alas !
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow 60
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
Battle's magnificently-stern array !
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay, 70
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent !

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine ;
Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow song ;
And his was of the bravest, and when shower'd
The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files along,
Even where the thickest of war's tempest lower'd, 80
They reach'd no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant
Howard !

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give ;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring. 90

I turn'd to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake ;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for ; though the sound of Fame

May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honour'd but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.

They mourn, but smile at length ; and, smiling, mourn : 100
The tree will wither long before it fall ;
The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn ;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
In massy hoariness ; the ruin'd wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone ;
The bars survive the captive they enthrall ;
The day drags through though storms keep out the sun ;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on :

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies ; and makes 110
A thousand images of one that was,
The same, and still the more, the more it breaks ;
And thus the heart will do which not forsakes,
Living in shatter'd guise, and still, and cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

QUESTIONS

A.

Tell the story of Waterloo as far as it is told here.

B.

1. Do you consider the metre well adapted to this particular passage ? Why ?
2. What do the first five stanzas suggest to the ear ?
3. What important part of the description does Byron purposely omit ? Why ?
4. What changes take place during the course of the description ? Does the style change appropriately ? Which part do you prefer ? Contrast particularly the closing stanzas with any of the earlier ones.

5. Why is Howard introduced ?
6. Does Byron show the power of creating an atmosphere and suggesting a state of mind or feeling ? Where in this description and where else in his poetry ?
7. What does Byron feel about war ?

C.

1. What light does this passage throw on Byron's own character ? *
2. Are you anywhere reminded of Pope, Dryden, Scott or any other poet ? ^{1, 2, 3}
- *3. The seventh stanza contains an example of "the pathetic fallacy." How would Ruskin class it ? ²⁸

DRACHENFELS

(From *Childe Harold*, Canto III)

I

THE castled crag of Drachenfels
 Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
 Whose breast of waters broadly swells
 Between the banks which bear the vine,
 And hills all rich with blossom'd trees,
 And fields which promise corn and wine,
 And scatter'd cities crowning these,
 Whose far white walls along them shine,
 Have strew'd a scene, which I should see
 With double joy wert *thou* with me.

10

2

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes,
 And hands which offer early flowers,
 Walk smiling o'er this paradise ;
 Above, the frequent feudal towers
 Through green leaves lift their walls of gray,
 And many a rock which steeply lowers,
 And noble arch in proud decay,

Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers ;
But one thing want these banks of Rhine,—
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine ! 20

3

I send the lilies given to me ;
Though long before thy hand they touch,
I know that they must wither'd be,
But yet reject them not as such ;
For I have cherish'd them as dear,
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy soul to mine even here,
When thou behold'st them drooping nigh,
And know'st them gather'd by the Rhine,
And offer'd from my heart to thine ! 30

4

The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty varying round :
The haughtiest breast its wish might bound
Through life to dwell delighted here ;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To nature and to me so dear,
Could thy dear eyes in following mine
Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine ! 40

QUESTIONS

A.

1. Describe the scene as Byron saw it. Make a drawing of it.
2. Each of the four stanzas has a theme. Name them all.

B.

1. What is the metre ? Why is it made to differ from the rest of *Childe Harold* ?
2. Is it more lyrical than other parts ? In what way ?
3. How is Byron's love of nature made to emphasise his love for his sister ?
4. What is the meaning of lines 35, 36 ?

C.

1. Does this reveal any traces of Byron's character as you have conceived it ?
- *2. Compare this poem with any others written on particular places, especially those of Wordsworth.*

CHILDE HAROLD, Canto III, lxxxv-xcvi

CLEAR, placid Leman ! thy contrasted lake,
 With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
 Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
 Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
 This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
 To waft me from distraction ; once I loved
 Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
 Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reproved,
 That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

It is the hush of night, and all between 10
 Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
 Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
 Save darken'd Jura, whose cap't heights appear
 Precipitously steep ; and drawing near,

There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood ; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more ;

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill ; 20
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dew
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

Ye stars ! which are the poetry of heaven !
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven, 30
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you ; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a
star.

All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most ;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep :—
All heaven and earth are still : From the high host 40
Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concenter'd in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone :

A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
 And purifies from self : it is a tone,
 The soul and source of music, which makes known 50
 Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
 Like to the fabled Cytherca's zone,
 Binding all things with beauty ; —'t would disarm
 The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

Not vainly did the early Persian make
 His altar the high places and the peak
 Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
 A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
 Uprear'd of human hands. Come, and compare 60
 Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
 With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
 Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy pray'r !

The sky is changed !—and such a change ! Oh night,
 And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
 Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
 Of a dark eye in woman ! Far along,
 From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
 Leaps the live thunder ! Not from one lone cloud,
 But every mountain now hath found a tongue, 70
 And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
 Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud !

And this is in the night :—Most glorious night !
 Thou wert not sent for slumber ! let me be
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
 A portion of the tempest and of thee !
 How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
 And the big rain comes dancing to the earth !
 And now again 't is black,—and now, the glee
 Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth, 80
 As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted ;
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed :—
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters,—war within themselves to wage. 90

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand :
For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
Flashing and cast around : of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath fork'd
His lightnings,—as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as desolation work'd,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurk'd.

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings ! ye ! 100
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful ; the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.
But where of ye, oh tempests ! is the goal ?
Are ye like those within the human breast ?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest ?

QUESTIONS

A.

Describe the storm.

B.

1. Where is the writer at the time? How do you know?
2. Compare the suitability of this metre for expressing storm and calm.
3. Which passages and which figures of speech do you consider peculiarly beautiful? Why?
4. Where does Byron identify his own moods with those of nature? Is he anywhere deeply moved?
5. What is the exact meaning of the last stanza?
6. What is suggested by the grasshopper, the stars, the stillness?
7. Give examples of lines where the very sound suggests the meaning.

C.

1. Compare the scene with the description in *The Prisoner of Chillon*.
2. What reason have you to believe that Byron was peculiarly attached to Lake Leman.
3. Where else in poetry is there a similar picture to that in lines 82-90? Which do you prefer?¹⁰
4. Which part of this description most reminds you of Spenser's use of the stanza? Why?³
- *5. What other great writers are associated with this spot? Has it given them inspiration?
- *6. Make a detailed comparison of this poem with Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, and of Byron's and Shelley's characters as thereby revealed.⁴

ROME

(From *Childe Harold*, Canto IV)

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
 Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
 Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
 Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
 As 't were its natural torches, for divine
 Should be the light which streams here, to illum

This long-explored but still exhaustless mine
 Of contemplation ; and the azure gloom
 Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven, 10
 Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
 And shadows forth its glory. There is given
 Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
 A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
 His hand, but broke his scythic, there is a power
 And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
 For which the palace of the present hour
 Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

* * * * *

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
 In murmur'd pity, or loud-roar'd applause, 20
 As man was slaughter'd by his fellow man.
 And wherefore slaughter'd ? wherefore, but because
 Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
 And the imperial pleasure.—Wherefore not ?
 What matters where we fall to fill the maws
 Of worms—on battle-plains or listed spot ?
 Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

I see before me the Gladiator lie :
 He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
 Consents to death, but conquers agony, 30
 And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
 Like the first of a thunder-shower ; and now
 The arena swims around him—he is gone,
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who
 won.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
 Were with his heart, and that was far away ;

He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay, 40
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—
All this rush'd with his blood—Shall he expire
And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman million's blame or praise 50
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much—and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void—seats crush'd—walls bow'd—
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

A ruin—yet what ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd: 60
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft away.

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead: 70
Heroes have trod this spot—'tis on their dust ye tread.

" While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand ;
 " When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall ;
 " And when Rome falls—the World." From our own land
 Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
 In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
 Ancient ; and these three mortal things are still
 On their foundations, and unalter'd all ;
 Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill, 80
 The World, the same wide den—of thieves, or what ye will.

QUESTIONS

A.

1. What reflections are suggested by Byron by the sight of the Coliseum ? In what circumstances does he see it ?
2. Describe it then and now. Of what is it a symbol ?

B.

1. How does Byron succeed in giving an impression of vastness and majesty ? of mystery ?
2. Contrast the thoughts of the dying gladiator and the scene amid which he dies. What other contrasts are there ?
3. What are the poet's thoughts on death ? Compare what he says in *Mazeppa*.
4. Which is the most musical stanza ?
- *5. Does Byron show cynicism and misanthropy here ?

C.

1. Compare Byron's moonlight scene with that in Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes*. Which do you prefer and why ? ¹¹
2. In what does it resemble or differ from the description in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (Canto II.) or Washington Irving's *Alhambra by Moonlight* ? ⁰
3. Is Byron a great master of pathos ? Compare the dying gladiator with death scenes in Shakespeare, Dryden, Keats. Which does he most resemble ? ^{8, 11, 12}

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

A FABLE

SONNET ON CHILLON

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind !
 Brightest in dungeons, Liberty ! thou art,
 For there thy habitation is the heart—
 The heart which love of thee alone can bind ;
 And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd—
 To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
 Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
 And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
 Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,
 And thy sad floor an altar—for 't was trod, 10
 Until his very steps have left a trace
 Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
 By Bonnivard !—May none those marks efface !
 For they appeal from tyranny to God.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
 Nor grew it white
 In a single night,
 As men's have grown from sudden fears :
 My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
 But rusted with a vile repose,
 For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
 And mine has been the fate of those
 To whom the goodly earth and air
 Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare ; 20
 But this was for my-father's faith
 I suffer'd chains and courted death ;
 That father perish'd at the stake
 For tenets he would not forsake :

And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place ;
We were seven—who now are one,

Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,

Proud of persecution's rage ;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied ;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

20

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left ;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp :

30

And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain ;
That iron is a cankering thing,

For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side

40

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone ;
We could not move a single pace, 50
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight ;
And thus together—yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart ;
'T was still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old, 60
Or song heroically bold ;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
 A grating sound—not full and free
 As they of yore were wont to be :
 It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
 And to uphold and cheer the rest 70
 I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.
 The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him—with eyes as blue as heaven,
 For him my soul was sorely moved :
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest ;
For he was beautiful as day—

(When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles, being free)—
 A polar day, which will not see
 A sunset till its summer's gone,
 Its sleepless summer of long light,
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun :
 And thus he was as pure and bright,
 And in his natural spirit gay,
 With tears for nought but others' ills,
 And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
 Unless he could assuage the woe
 Which he abhorr'd to view below.

90

V

The other was as pure of mind,
 But form'd to combat with his kind ;
 Strong in his frame, and of a mood
 Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
 And perish'd in the foremost rank
 With joy :—but not in chains to pine :
 His spirit wither'd with their clank,
 I saw it silently decline—
 And so perchance in sooth did mine :
 But yet I forced it on to cheer
 Those relics of a home so dear.
 He was a hunter of the hills,
 Had follow'd there the deer and wolf ;
 To him this dungeon was a gulf,
 And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

100

VI

Lake Lemán lies by Chillon's walls
 A thousand feet in depth below
 Its massy waters meet and flow ;

Thus much the fathom-line was sent 110
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave enthrals :
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day ;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd ;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high 120
And wanton in the happy sky ;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food ;
It was not that 't was coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare, 130
And for the like had little care :
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captive's tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den ;
But what were these to us or him ?
These wasted not his heart or limb ;
My brother's soul was of that mould 140
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied

The range of the steep mountain's side ;
But why delay the truth ?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died—and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave 150
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laugh'd—and laid him there :
The flat and turfless earth above 160
The being we so much did love ;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument !

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be 170
Less wretched now, and one day free ;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.

Oh, God ! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood :—
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread :
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow :
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind ;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur—not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most ;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less :
I listen'd, but I could not hear—
I call'd, for I was wild with fear ;
I knew 't was hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished ;
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him :—I found him not,

I only stirr'd in this black spot,
 I only lived—I only drew
 The accursed breath of dungeon-dew ;
 The last—the sole—the dearest link
 Between me and the eternal brink,
 Which bound me to my failing race,
 Was broken in this fatal place.
 One on the earth, and one beneath—
 My brothers—both had ceased to breathe : 220
 I took that hand which lay so still,
 Alas ! my own was full as chill ;
 I had not strength to stir, or strive,
 But felt that I was still alive—
 A frantic feeling, when we know
 That what we love shall ne'er be so.
 I know not why
 I could not die,
 I had no earthly hope—but faith,
 And that forbade a selfish death. 230

IX

What next befell me then and there
 I know not well—I never knew—
 First came the loss of light, and air,
 And then of darkness too :
 I had no thought, no feeling—none—
 Among the stones I stood a stone,
 And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
 As shrubless crags within the mist ;
 For all was blank, and bleak, and grey ;
 It was not night—it was not day, 240
 It was not even the dungeon-light,
 So hateful to my heavy sight,
 But vacancy absorbing space,
 And fixedness—without a place ;

There were no stars—no earth—no time—
 No check—no change—no good—no crime—
 But silence, and a stirless breath
 Which neither was of life nor death ;
 A sea of stagnant idleness,
 Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless ! 250

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
 It was the carol of a bird ;
 It ceased, and then it came again,
 The sweetest song ear ever heard,
 And mine was thankful till my eyes
 Ran over with the glad surprise,
 And they that moment could not see
 I was the mate of misery ;
 But then by dull degrees came back
 My senses to their wonted track, 260
 I saw the dungeon walls and floor
 Close slowly round me as before,
 I saw the glimmer of the sun
 Creeping as it before had done,
 But through the crevice where it came
 That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
 And tamer than upon the tree ;
 A lovely bird, with azure wings,
 And song that said a thousand things,
 And seem'd to say them all for me ! 270
 I never saw its like before,
 I ne'er shall see its likeness more :
 It seem'd like me to want a mate,
 But was not half so desolate,
 And it was come to love me when
 None lived to love me so again,
 And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
 Had brought me back to feel and think.

I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine, 280
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise ;
For—Heaven forgive that thought ! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile—
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me ;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 't was mortal—well I knew. 290
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,—
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate, 300
My keepers grew compassionate ;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was :—my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part ;
And round the pillars one by one, 310
Returning where my walk begun,

Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod ;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall, '
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all, 320
Who loved me in a human shape ;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me :
No child—no sire—no kin had I,
No partner in my misery ;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad ;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high, 330
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame ;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow ;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush ;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down ; 340
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view ;

A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
 Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
 But in it there were three tall trees,
 And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
 And by it there were waters flowing,
 And on it there were young flowers growing,
 Of gentle breath and hue. 350
 The fish swam by the castle wall,
 And they seem'd joyous each and all ;
 The eagle rode the rising blast,
 Methought he never flew so fast
 As then to me he seem'd to fly,
 And then new tears came in my eye,
 And I felt troubled—and would fain
 I had not left my recent chain ;
 And when I did descend again,
 The darkness of my dim abode 360
 Fell on me as a heavy load ;
 It was as is a new-dug grave,
 Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
 And yet my glance, too much oppress'd,
 Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
 I kept no count—I took no note,
 I had no hope my eyes to raise,
 And clear them of their dreary mote ;
 At last men came to set me free, 370
 I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,
 It was at length the same to me,
 Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
 I learn'd to love despair.
 And thus when they appear'd at last,
 And all my bonds aside were cast,

These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own !
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home :
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they ?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell !
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell—
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are :—even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

380

390

QUESTIONS

A.

1. What idea is Bonnivard's story made to suggest (in the sonnet) ?
2. Tell briefly the story of the Prisoner.
3. Compare the characters of the three brothers.

B.

1. What connection is there between the sonnet and the longer poem ?
2. Does the writer show any real sympathy for his hero ? Do you think that Byron had a real passion for liberty ? Why ?
3. What is the metre of the poem ? Would it be better if it were perfectly regular ? Why ?
4. What are the peculiar qualities of this metre ? How does the poet take full advantage of them ?
5. Discuss Byron's use of repetition, contrast and climax in the poem.
6. Describe the castle and its surroundings and make a sketch of it. How could you guess that the poem was written in sight of it ?
7. What are the various effects of nature on the prisoner ?
8. Show how a broader sympathy grows out of his captivity.
9. How does Byron bring out loneliness, darkness, monotony, mental suffering ?
10. Are there any peculiarly happy similes ?

C.

1. Why is the story called a fable ? Cf. Dryden's Fables.⁸
2. Compare Byron's use of paragraphs with that of Keats or Scott.^{9, 11}
3. Are there any lines that have the same ring as Pope's ? Which are they ?
4. How are you made to realise the character of the teller of the story ? Compare Browning's use of this method.¹⁵
5. Is there anything in the later history of Byron which suggests a sympathy with the life of Bonnivard ?
6. What is the rhyme-scheme of the sonnet ? Compare it with that of any other sonnets you know.^{4, 5, 11, 12}
7. In what way does the passage beginning at l. 251 remind you of any part of *The Ancient Mariner* ?¹⁰
- *8. What other poet shows a great love of freedom ? Show how differently he is affected.¹⁵

From MAZEPPA

Mazeppa tells King Charles XII. how, as a page, he was caught making love to the young wife of his master the count.

“ For lovers there are many eyes,
 And such there were on us ;—the devil
 On such occasions should be civil—
 The devil !—I'm loth to do him wrong,
 It might be some untoward 'aint,
 Who would not be at rest too long,
 But to his pious bile gave vent—
 But one fair night, some lurking spies
 Surprised and seized us both.
 The Count was something more than wroth— 10
 I was unarm'd ; but if in steel,
 All cap-à-pic from head to heel,
 What 'gainst their numbers could I do ?—
 'T was near his castle, far away
 From city or from succour near,
 And almost on the break of day ;
 I did not think to see another,
 My moments seem'd reduced to few ;
 And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
 And, it may be, a saint or two, 20
 As I resign'd me to my fate,
 They led me to the castle gate :

* * * * *

“ ‘ Bring forth the horse ! ’—the horse was brought ;
 In truth, he was a noble steed,
 A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
 Who look'd as though the speed of thought
 Were in his limbs ; but he was wild,
 Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
 With spur and bridle undefiled—
 'T was but a day he had been caught ; 30

And snorting, with erected mane,
And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
In the full foam of wrath and dread
To me the desert-born was led ;
They bound me on, that menial throng,
Upon his back with many a thong ;
They loosed him with a sudden lash—
Away !—away !—and on we dash !—
Torrents less rapid and less rash.

“ Away !—away !—my breath was gone— 40
I saw not where he hurried on :
’T was scarcely yet the break of day,
And on he foam’d—away !—away !—
The last of human sounds which rose,
As I was darted from my foes,
Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
Which on the wind came roaring after
A moment from that rabble rout :
With sudden wrath I wrench’d my head,
And snapp’d the cord, which to the mane 50
Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
And writhing half my form about,
Howl’d back my curse ; but ’midst the tread,
The thunder of my courser’s speed,
Perchance they did not hear nor heed :
It vexes me—for I would fain
Have paid their insult back again
I paid it well in after days :
There is not of that castle gate,
Its drawbridge and portcullis’ weight, 60
Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left ;
Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall ;
And many a time ye there might pass,
Nor dream that e’er that fortress was :

I saw its turrets in a blaze,
Their crackling battlements all cleft,
And the hot lead pour down like rain
From off the scorch'd and blackening roof, 70
Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.
They little thought that day of pain,
When launch'd, as on the lightning's flash,
They bade me to destruction dash,
That one day I should come again,
With twice five thousand horse, to thank
The Count for his uncourtous ride.
They play'd me then a bitter prank,
When, with the wild horse for my guide,
They bound me to his foaming flank : 80
At length I play'd them one as frank—
For time at last sets all things even—
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.
“ Away, away, my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind,
All human dwellings left behind ; 90
We sped like meteors through the sky,
When with its crackling sound the night
Is chequer'd with the northern light :
Town—village—none were on our track,
But a wild plain of far extent,
And bounded by a forest black ;
And, save the scarce seen battlement
On distant heights of some strong hold,
Against the Tartars built of old,
No trace of man. The year before 100
A Turkish army had march'd o'er :
And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,

The verdure flies the bloody sod :—
The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
And a low breeze crept moaning by—
I could have answer'd with a sigh—

But fast we fled, away, away—
And I could neither sigh nor pray ;
And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
Upon the coursers' bristling mane ;
But, snorting still with rage and fear,
He flew upon his far career :
At times I almost thought, indeed,
He must have slacken'd in his speed ;
But no—my bound and slender frame

110

Was nothing to his angry might,
And merely like a spur became :
Each motion which I made to free
My swoln limbs from their agony

120

Increas'd his fury and affright :
I tried my voice,—'t was faint and low,
But yet he swerv'd as from a blow ;
And, starting to each accent, sprang
As from a sudden trumpet's clang :
Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er ;
And in my tongue the thirst became
A something fierier far than flame.

" We near'd the wild wood—'t was so wide,
I saw no bounds on either side ;
'T was studded with old sturdy trees,
That bent not to the roughest breeze
Which howls down from Siberia's waste,
And strips the forest in its haste,—
But these were few, and far between
Set thick with shrubs more young and green,
Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
Ere strown by those autumnal eves

130

That nip the forest's foliage dead,
Discolour'd with a lifeless red, 110
Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore
Upon the slain when battle's o'er,
And some long winter's night hath shed
Its frost o'er every tombless head,
So cold and stark the raven's beak
May peck unpierced each frozen cheek :
'T was a wild waste of underwood,
And here and there a chestnut stood,
The strong oak, and the hardy pine ;
But far apart—and well it were, 150
Or else a different lot were mine—
The boughs gave way, and did not tear
My limbs ; and I found strength to bear
My wounds, already scarr'd with cold—
My bonds forbade to loose my hold.
We rustled through the leaves like wind,
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind ;
By night I heard them on the track,
Their troop came hard upon our back,
With their long gallop, which can tire 160
The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire :
Where'er we flew they follow'd on,
Nor left us with the morning sun ;
Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
At day-break winding through the wood,
And through the night had heard their feet
Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
Oh ! how I wish'd for spear or sword,
At least to die amidst the horde,
And perish—if it must be so— 170
At bay, destroying many a foe.
When first my courser's race begun,
I wish'd the goal already won ;
But now I doubted strength and speed.

Vain doubt ! his swift and savage breed
Had nerved him like the mountain-roe ;
Nor faster falls the blinding snow
Which whelms the peasant near the door
Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast, 180
Than through the forest-paths he past—
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild ;
All furious as a favour'd child
Balk'd of its wish ; or fiercer still—
A woman piqued—who has her will.
“ The wood was past ; 't was more than noon,
But chill the air, although in June ;
Or it might be my veins ran cold—
Prolong'd endurance tames the bold ;
And I was then not what I seem, 190
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o'er :
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path,
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
Thus bound in nature's nakedness ;
Sprung from a race whose rising blood
When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like 200
The rattle-snake's, in act to strike,
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk ?
The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,
I seem'd to sink upon the ground ;
But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,
And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more :
The skies spun like a mighty wheel ;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel, 210

And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
Which saw no farther : he who dies
Can die no more than then I died.
O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,
I felt the blackness come and go,

And strove to wake ; but could not make
My senses climb up from below :
I felt as on a plank at sea,
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
At the same time upheave and whelm,
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.

220

My undulating life was as
The fancied lights that flitting pass
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
Fever begins upon the brain ;
But soon it pass'd, with little pain,

But a confusion worse than such : ,

I own that I should deem it much,
Dying, to feel the same again ;
And yet I do suppose we must
Feel far more ere we turn to dust :
No matter ; I have bared my brow
Full in Death's face—before—and now.

230

“ My thoughts came back ; where was I ? Cold,

And numb, and giddy : pulse by pulse
Life reassumed its lingering hold,
And throb by throb : till grown a pang

Which for a moment would convulse,

My blood reflow'd, though thick and chill ;
My ear with uncouth noises rang,

240

My heart began once more to thrill ;
My sight return'd, though dim ; alas !
And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.
Methought the dash of waves was nigh ;
There was a gleam too of the sky,
Studded with stars ;—it is no dream ;

The wild horse swims the wilder stream !
The bright broad river's gushing tide
Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
And we are half-way, struggling o'er
To yon unknown and silent shore.
The waters broke my hollow trance,
And with a temporary strength

250

My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.
My courser's broad breast proudly braves,
And dashes off the ascending waves,
And onward we advance !

We reach the slippery shore at length,

A haven I but little prized,
For all behind was dark and drear
And all before was night and fear.
How many hours of night or day
In those suspended pangs I lay,
I could not tell ; I scarcely knew
If this were human breath I drew.

260

" With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
Up the repelling bank.

We gain the top : a boundless plain
Spreads through the shadow of the night,

270

And onward, onward, onward, seems,
Like precipices in our dreams,
To stretch beyond the sight ;
And here and there a speck of white,

Or scatter'd spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right

But nought distinctly seen
In the dim waste would indicate
The omen of a cottage gate ;
No twinkling taper from afar

280

Stood like a hospitable star ;
 Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
 To make him merry with my woes :
 That very cheat had cheer'd me then !
 Although detected, welcome still,
 Reminding me, through every ill,
 Of the abodes of men.

" Onward we went—but slack and slow ; 290
 His savage force at length o'erspent,
 The drooping courser, faint and low,
 All feebly foaming went.
 A sickly infant had had power
 To guide him forward in that hour ;
 But useless all to me.
 His new-born tamencess nought avail'd—
 My limbs were bound ; my force had fail'd,
 Perchance, had they been free. 300
 With feeble effort still I tried
 To rend the bonds so starkly tied—
 But still it was in vain ;
 My limbs were only wrung the more,
 And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
 Which but prolong'd their pain :
 The dizzy race seem'd almost done,
 Although no goal was nearly won :
 Some streaks announced the coming sun—
 How slow, alas ! he came !
 Methought that mist of dawning gray 310
 Would never dapple into day ;
 How heavily it roll'd away—
 Before the eastern flame
 Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
 And call'd the radiance from their cars,
 And fill'd the earth, from his deep throne,
 With lonely lustre, all his own.

“ Up rose the sun ; the mists were curl’d
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around—behind—before ; 320
What boot’d it to traverse o’er
Plain, forest, river ? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil ;
No sign of travel—none of toil ;
The very air was mute ;
And not an insect’s shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird’s new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a worst,
Panting as if his heart would burst, 330
The weary brute still stagger’d on ;
And still we were—or seem’d—alone :
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh,
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind those branches stirs ?
No, no ! from out the forest prance
A trampling troop ; I see them come !
In one vast squadron they advance !
I strove to cry—my lips were dumb. 340
The steeds rush on in plunging pride ;
But where are they the reins to guide ?
A thousand horse—and none to ride !
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils—never stretch’d by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr’d by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o’er the sea, 350
Came thickly thundering on,
As if our faint approach to meet ;
The sight re-nerv’d my courser’s feet,

A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
He answer'd, and then fell ;
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immoveable,
His first and last career is done !
On came the troop—they saw him stoop, 360
They saw me strangely bound along
His back with many a bloody thong :
They stop—they start—they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed,
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,
Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide ; 370
They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside,
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.—
They left me there to my despair,
Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch,
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me—and there we lay
The dying on the dead ! 380
I little deem'd another day
Would see my houseless, helpless head.
“ And there from morn till twilight bound,
I felt the heavy hours toil round,
With just enough of life to see
My last of suns go down on me,
In hopeless certainty of mind,
That makes us feel at length resign'd
To that which our foreboding years

Presents the worst and last of fears 390
Inevitable—even a boon,
Nor more unkind for coming soon ;
Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
As if it only were a snare

That prudence might escape :
At times both wish'd for and implored,
At times sough't with self-pointed sword,
Yet still a dark and hideous close
To even intolerable woes,

And welcome in no shape. 400
And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
They who have revell'd beyond measure
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
Die calm, or calmer, oft than he
Whose heritage was misery :
For he who hath in turn run through
All that was beautiful and new,

Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave ;
And, save the future, (which is view'd
Not quite as men are base or good, 410
But as their nerves may be endued,)

With nought perhaps to grieve :—
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
Appears, to his distemper'd eyes,
Arrived to rob him of his prize,
The tree of his new Paradise.
To-morrow would have given him all,
Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall ;
To-morrow would have been the first 420
Of days no more deplored or curst,
But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
Guerdon of many a painful hour ;
To-morrow would have given him power

To rule, to shine, to smite, to save—
And must it dawn upon his grave ?

“ The sun was sinking—still I lay
Chain’d to the chill and stiffening steed,
I thought to mingle there our clay ; 430
And my dim eyes of death had need ;

No hope arose of being freed ;
I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly,
Who scarce would wait till both should die,

Ere his repast begun ;
He flew, and perch’d, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before ;
I saw his wing through twilight flit, 440
And once so near me he alit

I could have smote, but lack’d the strength ;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat’s faint struggling noise,
Which scarcely could be call’d a voice,
Together scared him off at length.—

I know no more—my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fix’d my dull eyes from afar, 450
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
Sensation of recurring sense,

And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath,
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o’er
My heart, and sparks that cross’d my brain—
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more. 460

“ I woke—Where was I ?—Do I see
 A human face look down on me ?
 And doth a roof above me close ?
 Do these limbs on a couch repose ?
 Is this a chamber where I lie ?
 And is it mortal yon bright eye,
 That watches me with gentle glance ?

I closed my own again once more,
 As doubtful that the former trance

Could not as yet be o’er.

470

A slender girl, long-hair’d, and tall,
 Sate watching by the cottage wall ;
 The sparkle of her eye I caught,
 Even with my first return of thought ;
 For ever and anon she threw

A prying, pitying glance on me

With her black eyes so wild and free :
 I gazed, and gazed, until I knew

No vision it could be,—

But that I lived, and was released
 From adding to the vulture’s feast :
 And when the Cossack maid beheld
 My heavy eyes at length unseal’d,
 She smil’d—and I essay’d to speak,

480

But fail’d—and she approach’d, and made
 With lip and finger signs that said,

I must not strive as yet to break
 The silence, till my strength should be
 Enough to leave my accents free ;
 And then her hand on mine she laid,
 And smooth’d the pillow for my head,
 And stole along on tiptoe tread,

490

And gently oped the door, and spake
 In whispers—ne’er was voice so sweet !
 Even music follow’d her light feet ;—

But those she call’d were not awake,
 And she went forth ; *but, ere she pass’d,

Another look on me she cast,
Another sign she made, to say,
That I had nought to fear, that all
Were near, at my command or call,
And she would not delay
Her due return :—while she was gone,
Methought I felt too much alone.
“ She came with mother and with sire—
What need of more ?—I will not tire
With long recital of the rest,
Since I became the Cossack’s guest.
They found me senseless on the plain—
They bore me to the nearest hut—
They brought me into life again—
Me—one day o’er their realm to reign !
Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
His rage, refining on my pain,
Sent me forth to the wilderness,
Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
To pass the desert to a throne,—
What mortal his own doom may guess ?—
Let none despond, let none despair !
To-morrow the Borysthenes
May see our coursers graze at ease
Upon his Turkish bank,—and never
Had I such welcome for a river
As I shall yield when safely there.
Comrades, good night ! ”—The Hetman threw
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him, who took his rest whene’er
The hour arrived, no matter where :
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale, *he* wonder’d not,—
The king had been an hour asleep.

QUESTIONS

A.

1. Tell the story of Mazeppa's ride.
2. What happened long after as a sequel ?

B.

1. Give an account of Mazeppa's character as far as you can learn it from the poem.
2. What idea do you gather of the country through which he rode ?
3. Which lines suggest most vividly (a) the wild rush of the horse, (b) the slow implacable pursuit of the wolves ? Give other examples of contrast.
4. What do you think appealed most to Byron in the story of Mazeppa ?
5. Illustrate the vivid realism of the poem.
6. In which lines does the sound best express the sense ? Where do you find loneliness, pain, weariness, and giddy speed suggested ?
7. Compare Byron's use of nature here and in *The Prisoner of Chillon*. What aspects of nature seem to appeal to him most ?
8. Show how Byron makes use of the sunrise and the sunset. Which part of *The Prisoner of Chillon* reminds you of the long day spent lying in the forest ?
9. Give examples of metaphor and simile. From what are they mostly drawn ?
10. What does Byron say about death, and how does he explain Mazeppa's calmness ?
11. What is the tone of the closing lines of the poem ? Do you consider this appropriate ? Why ?

C.

1. Compare the death of the horse with a similar description in *The Destruction of Sennacherib*.
2. To what extent does Byron achieve the variety of Dryden's couplet ? Compare the suitability of the two metres for long narrative poems.⁸
3. What points of resemblance can you discover between Mazeppa and John Gilpin ? Compare the metre of *Christabel* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.^{9, 10, 11}
4. Compare Mazeppa's thoughts with those of Wordsworth's forsaken Indian woman.⁵
- *5. What opinion do Continental critics hold of Byron's works ? Goethe speaks of his "daring, dash, and grandiosity." Discuss and illustrate these qualities.
- *6. How does he express bodily and mental suffering ? Compare *The Ancient Mariner* from this point of view.¹²
- *7. With what period in history and with what country is Mazeppa associated. Does Byron pay more attention to the personal and emotional side of his story, or to the historical background ? Compare Scott's treatment of a subject. What light does this throw on Byron's character ?⁹

INCANTATION

(*From Manfred, Act I, Sc. i*)

WHEN the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass ;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answer'd owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

10

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep ;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish ;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone ;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gather'd in a cloud ;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

20

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unscen,
Must be near thee, and hath been ;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

30

And a magic voice and verse
 Hath baptized thee with a curse ;
 And a spirit of the air
 Hath begirt thee with a snare ;
 In the wind there is a voice
 Shall forbid thee to rejoice ;
 And to thee shall Night deny
 All the quiet of her sky ;
 And the day shall have a sun,
 Which shall make thee wish it done.

40

From thy false tears I did distil
 An essence which hath strength to kill ;
 From thy own heart I then did wring
 The black blood in its blackest spring ;
 From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake,
 For there it coil'd as in a brake ;
 From thy own lip I drew the charm
 Which gave all these their chiefest harm ;
 In proving every poison known,
 I found the strongest was thine own.

50

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
 By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
 By that most seeming virtuous eye,
 By thy shut soul's hypocrisy ;
 By the perfection of thine art
 Which pass'd for human thine own heart ;
 By thy delight in others' pain,
 And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
 I call upon thee ! and compel
 Thyself to be thy proper Hell !

60

And on thy head I pour the vial
 Which doth devote thee to this trial ;
 Nor to slumber, nor to die,
 Shall be in thy destiny ;

Though thy death shall still seem near
 To thy wish, but as a fear ;
 Lo ! the spell now works around thee,
 And the clankless chain hath bound thee ;
 O'er thy heart and brain together
 Hath the word been pass'd—now wither ! 70

QUESTIONS

A.

In what does the curse consist ?

B.

1. Is the metre suited to an incantation ? Why ? Does it differ at all from the metre of *Mazeppa* and *The Prisoner of Chillon* ? What does this suggest ?

2. What is it that tortures Manfred ? What does he ask for ? Bearing this in mind, say why you would call it a good curse.

3. What use is made of natural description ?

4. Is there the right suggestion of horror ? Where ?

5. Illustrate Byron's use of climax.

C.

1. Compare with this the curses in Coleridge's *The Three Graves* and Wordsworth's *Harry Gill*.⁵

2. Illustrate the second half of this incantation from the story of Peter Grimes.²⁴

3. Compare the methods of Coleridge and Byron in creating a supernatural atmosphere. Which do you prefer ?¹⁰

4. If the supernatural may ever be called natural, to which of the above would you apply the word and which would you call "stagey" ?

5. Is the atmosphere of this poem more like that of *Christabel* or that of *Macbeth* ? In what way ?^{10, 12}

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

SHE walks in beauty, like the night
 Of cloudless climes and starry skies ;
 And all that's best of dark and bright
 Meet in her aspect and her eyes :
 Thus mellow'd to that tender light
 Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
 Had half impair'd the nameless grace,
 Which waves in every raven tress,
 Or softly lightens o'er her face ;
 While thoughts serenely sweet express,
 How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

10

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
 But tell of days in goodness spent,
 A mind at peace with all below,
 A heart whose love is innocent !

OH ! SNATCH'D AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM

OH ! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,
 On thee shall press no ponderous tomb ;
 But on thy turf shall roses rear
 Their leaves, the earliest of the year ;
 And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom :

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
 Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
 And feed deep thought with many a dream,
 And lingering pause and lightly tread ;
 Fond wretch ! as if her step disturb'd the dead !

10

Away ! we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress :
Will this unteach us to complain ?
Or make one mourner weep the less ?
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

SO, WE'LL GO NO MORE A ROVING

So, we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a roving
By the light of the moon.

10

WHEN WE TWO PARTED

WHEN we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss ;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

WHEN WE TWO PARTED 57

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow— 10

It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.

Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame ;

I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear ;

A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear ? 20

They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well :—

Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell

In secret we met—

In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,

Thy spirit deceive.

If I should meet thee

After long years, 30

How should I greet thee ?—

With silence and tears.

THERE BE NONE OF BEAUTY'S DAUGHTERS

(Stanzas for Music)

THERE be none of Beauty's daughters

With a magic like thee ;

And like music on the waters

Is thy sweet voice to me :

When, as if its sound were causing
 The charmed ocean's pausing,
 The waves lie still and gleaming,
 And the lull'd winds seem dreaming :

And the midnight moon is weaving

Her bright chain o'er the deep ; 10
 Whose breast is gently heaving,

As an infant's asleep :
 So the spirit bows before thee, *
 To listen and adore thee ;
 With a full but soft emotion,
 Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

QUESTIONS

A.

Say briefly what each of these five poems is about.

B.

1. In what way do the first two poems differ from the third and fourth ? Which should you consider more likely to be personal and why ?

2. Compare the metre of *When We Two Parted* with that of the others. How does Byron compel you to read it slowly ? How does he produce a feeling of sadness and regret ?

3. The last is called "Stanzas for Music." Discuss its peculiar metrical character and its suitability.

C.

1. What is required of a good lyric ? Does Byron satisfy this demand here ?

2. What comparison do the first two poems suggest with Pope, Collins and other eighteenth century poets ? Make use of the others to contrast the so-called romantic spirit. 7, 21

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
 And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold ;
 And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
 When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.
 Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
 That host with their banners at sunset were seen :
 Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
 That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.
 For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
 And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd ; 10
 And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
 And their hearts but once heav'd, and for ever grew still !
 And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
 But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride :
 And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
 And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.
 And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
 With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail ;
 And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
 The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown. 20
 And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
 And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
 Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord !

QUESTIONS

B.

1. What is the metre of the poem ? Is it well suited to the subject ? What effect does it have on the sound and movement of the poem ?
2. Where do you see examples of Byron's love of contrast ? What use does he make of vivid detail to suggest ideas ?
3. Notice the metaphors and similes. Are they in themselves beautiful ? Do they help you to appreciate what they describe ?

C.

Compare the description in II. Kings 19 and II. Chronicles 32. Has Byron added much, and with what result ? 28

FARE THEE WELL

FARE thee well ! and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare *thee well* :
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain,
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again :

Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show ! 10
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'T was not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend thee—
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe :

Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound ? 20

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not ;
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away :

Still thine own life retaineth—
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat ;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is—that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead ;
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widow'd bed. 30

And when thou wouldst solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say " Father ! "
Though his care she must forego ?

When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is press'd,
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,
Think of him thy love had bless'd ! 40

Should her lincaments resemble
Those thou never more may'st see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me.

All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know ;
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,
Wither, yet with *thee* they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken ;
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee—by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now : 50

But 't is done—all words are idle—
Words from me are vainer still ;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will.—

Fare thee well !—thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie,
Sear'd in heart, and lone, and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die. 60

QUESTIONS

A.

Say what you imagine to have been the state of affairs leading to the writing of this poem. What are the feelings of the writer?

B.

1. Compare the metre and style with that of the last poem. Illustrate from the comparison rising and falling metres and their effects.

2. With which of the five lyrics on pages 55-58 would you group this poem? Why?

3. Byron has been accused of showy sentiment and complete lack of deep feeling here and elsewhere. By comparing this with his other poems, form a judgment of your own.

4. Comment on the rhymes. Does Byron use them more than other poets? Compare his use of them in *When We Two Parted* and elsewhere.

C.

What passage of *Christabel* would you quote in connection with this poem? ¹⁰

NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL

FROM THE FRENCH

FAREWELL to the Land, where the gloom of my Glory
 Arose and o'ershadow'd the earth with her name—
 She abandons me now—but the page of her story,
 The brightest or blackest, is fill'd with my fame.
 I have warr'd with a world which vanquish'd me only
 When the meteor of conquest allured me too far;
 I have coped with the nations which dread me thus lonely,
 The last single Captive to millions in war.

Farewell to thee, France! when thy diadem crown'd me,
 I made thee the gem and the wonder of earth,— 10
 But thy weakness decrees I should leave as I found thee,
 Decay'd in thy glory, and sunk in thy worth.

Oh ! for the veteran hearts that were wasted
In strife with the storm, when their battles were won—
Then the Eagle, whose gaze in that moment was blasted,
Had still soar'd with eyes fix'd on victory's sun !

Farewell to thee, France !—but when Liberty rallies
Once more in thy regions, remember me then—
The violet still grows in the depth of thy valleys ;
Though wither'd, thy tear will unfold it again— 20
Yet, yet, I may baffle the hosts that surround us,
And yet may thy heart leap awake to my voice—
There are links which must break in the chain that has
bound us,
Then turn thee and call on the Chief of thy choice !

QUESTIONS

A.

Who is speaking ? What are his thoughts ?

B.

1. What other poems are in this metre ? What is its effect ?
2. Say what you can of the figures of speech and rhymes of the poem.

C.

1. From your knowledge of Byron's character what should you think appealed to him most in the subject and metre ? *
2. Compare King Arthur's farewell in *Morte d'Arthur*.¹⁹

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

THERE'S not a joy the world can give like that it takes away.
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull
decay ;

'T is not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which
fades so fast,

But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself be
past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess :

The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall never stretch
again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes
down ;

It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own ; so
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 't is where the ice
appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract
the breast,

Through midnight hours that yield no more their former
hope of rest ;

'T is but as ivy-leaves around the ruin'd turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and grey
beneath.

Oh could I feel as I have felt,—or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a vanish'd
scene ;

As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish though
they be,

So, midst the wither'd waste of life, those tears would flow
to me.

QUESTIONS

A.

Express the leading idea of these stanzas in your own words.

B.

1. What is the metre? How else could it be written or printed without changing the rhythm?

2. Compare the language of the poem with that of *Fare Thee Well*. What is the most striking thing about the style?

3. Pick out any particularly effective lines and say why you choose them.

C.

1. What is the metre? Compare its use, by and effect in, other writers, e.g. Chapman's *Homer*, Macaulay, Masefield.²⁰

*2. Contrast with this Wordsworth's and Coleridge's grief for lost powers.

From ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

A man must serve his time to ev'ry trade
 Save censure—critics all are ready made.
 Take hackney'd jokes from Miller, got by rote,
 With just enough of learning to misquote ;
 A mind well skill'd to find or forge a fault ;
 A turn for punning, call it Attic salt ;
 To Jeffrey go, be silent and discreet,
 His pay is just ten sterling pounds per sheet :
 Fear not to lie, 't will seem a sharper hit ;
 Shrink not from blasphemy, 't will pass for wit ;
 Care not for feeling—pass your proper jest,
 And stand a critic, hated yet caress'd.

10

And shall we own such judgment? no—as soon
 Seek roses in December—ice in June ;
 Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff ;
 Believe a woman or an epitaph,
 Or any other thing that's false, before
 You trust in critics, who themselves are sore ;
 Or yield one single thought to be misled
 By Jeffrey's heart, or Lambe's Bæotian head.
 To these young tyrants, by themselves misplaced,

20

Combined usurpers on the throne of taste ;
 To these, when authors bend in humble awe,
 And hail their voice as truth, their word as law—
 While these are censors, 't would be sin to spare ;
 While such are critics, why should I forbear ?
 But yet, so near all modern worthies run,
 'T is doubtful whom to seek, or whom to shun ;
 Nor know we when to spare, or where to strike,
 Our bards and censors are so much alike.

30

Then should you ask me, why I venture o'er
 The path which Pope and Gifford trod before ;
 If not yet sicken'd, you can still proceed :
 Go on ; my rhyme will tell you as you read.
 " But hold ! " exclaims a friend,—" here's some neglect :
 This—that—and t' other line seem incorrect."
 What then ? the self-same blunder Pope has got,
 And careless Dryden—" Ay, but Pye has not : "—
 Indeed !—'t is granted, faith !—but what care I ?
 Better to err with Pope, than shine with Pye.

40

* * * *

Behold ! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
 For notice eager, pass in long review :
 Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
 And rhyme and blank maintain an equal race ;
 Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode ;
 And tales of terror jostle on the road ;
 Immeasurable measures move along ;
 For simpering folly loves a varied song,
 To strange mysterious dulness still the friend,
 Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
 Thus Lays of Minstrels—may they be the last !—
 On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast.
 While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
 That dames may listen to the sound at nights ;
 And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood,
 Decoy young border-nobles through the wood,

50

And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why ;
While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
Forbidding knights to read who cannot spell, 60
Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
And fight with honest men to shield a knave.

Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
The gibbet or the field prepared to grace ;
A mighty mixture of the great and base.
And think'st thou, Scott ! by vain conceit perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance, 70
Though Murray with his Miller may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line ?
No ! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame :
Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain !
And sadly gaze on gold they cannot gain !
Such be their meed, such still the just reward
Of prostituted muse and hireling bard ! 80
For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
And bid a long " good night to Marmion."

These are the themes that claim our plaudits now ;
These are the bards to whom the muse must bow ;
While Milton, Dryden, Pope, alike forgot,
Resign their hallow'd bays to Walter Scott.

* * * * *

Oh, Southey ! Southey ! cease thy varied song !
A bard may chant too often and too long ;
As thou art strong in verse, in mercy, spare !
A fourth, alas ! were more than we could bear. 90

But if, in spite of all the world can say,
Thou still wilt verseward plod thy weary way ;
If still in Berkley ballads most uncivil,
Thou wilt devote old women to the devil,
The babe unborn thy dread intent may rue :
" God help thee," Southey, and thy readers too.

Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
That mild apostate from poetic rule,
The simple Wordsworth, framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favourite May, 100
Who warns his friend " to shake off toil and trouble,
And quit his books, for fear of growing double ; "
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose ;
Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane ;
And Christmas stories tortured into rhyme
Contain the essence of the true sublime.
Thus, when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,
The idiot mother of " an idiot boy ; " 110
A moon-struck, silly lad, who lost his way,
And, like his bard, confounded night with day ;
So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the " idiot in his glory,"
Conceive the bard the hero of the story.

Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed here,
To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear ?
Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
Yet still obscurity's a welcome guest, 120
If Inspiration should her aid refuse
To him who takes a pixy for a muse,
Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
The bard who soars to elegise an ass.
So well the subject suits his noble mind,
He brays, the laureat of the longear'd kind.

QUESTIONS

A.

1. What is Byron's opinion of critics ?
2. What poets and what poems does he approve or despise ?

B.

1. Is Byron naturally a satirical poet ? Illustrate your answer from his other poems.
2. In what way do you consider Byron bitter in this poem ? How does he excuse his bitterness ?
3. What are the essentials of great satire ? Does this poem possess them ?

C.

1. Compare Byron's use of the couplet with that of Dryden, Pope and Keats.^{7, 8, 11}
2. Account for Byron's attack on Southey and Wordsworth and his praise of Pope.^{6, 7, 22}
- *3. What poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge are here referred to ? Is Byron's description of Coleridge very unfavourable ?^{4, 10}
4. Defend Wordsworth's *Idiot Boy*.⁵
- *5. Why "mild apostate from poetic rule" ? Does Wordsworth say "Prose is verse, and verse is merely prose" ? Where ?⁵
- *6. Compare Dryden's attack on contemporary poets ? Is he more or less justified than Byron ?²¹

EPISTLE FROM MR. MURRAY TO DR. POLIDORI

DEAR Doctor, I have read your play,
Which is a good one in its way,—
Purges the eyes and moves the bowels,
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels
With tears, that, in a flux of grief,
Afford hysterical relief
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,
Which your catastrophe convulses.

I like your moral and machinery ;
Your plot, too, has such scope for scenery ; 10
Your dialogue is apt and smart ;
The play's concoction full of art ;
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,

All stab, and every body dies.
 In short, your tragedy would be
 The very thing to hear and see :
 And for a piece of publication,
 If I decline on this occasion,
 It is not that I am not sensible
 To merits in themselves ostensible, 20
 But—and I grieve to speak it—plays
 Are drugs—mere drugs, sir—now-a-days.
 I had a heavy loss by “ Manuel,”—
 Too lucky if it prove not annual,—
 And Sotheby, with his “ Orestes,”
 (Which, by the by, the author’s best is,)
 Has lain so very long on hand,
 That I despair of all demand.
 I’ve advertised, but see my books,
 Or only watch my shopman’s looks ;— 30
 Still Ivan, Ina, and such lumber,
 My back-shop glut, my shelves encumber.

There’s Byron too, who once did better,
 Has sent me, folded in a letter,
 A sort of—it’s no more a drama
 Than Darnley, Ivan, or Kehama ;
 So alter’d since last year his pen is,
 I think he’s lost his wits at Venice.
 In short, sir, what with one and t’ other,
 I dare not venture on another. 40
 I write in haste ; excuse each blunder ;
 The coaches through the street so thunder !
 My room’s so full—we’ve Gifford here
 Reading MS., with Hookham Frere,
 Pronouncing on the nouns and particles
 Of some of our forthcoming Articles.

The Quarterly—Ah, sir, if you
 Had but the genius to review !—
 A smart critique upon St. Helena,

Or if you only would but tell in a 50
 Short compass what—but, to resume :
 As I was saying, sir, the room—
 The room's so full of wits and bards,
 Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and Wards,
 And others, neither bards nor wits :—
 My humble tenement admits
 All persons in the dress of gent.,
 From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.

A party dines with me to-day,
 All clever men, who make their way ; 60
 Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton, and Chantrey,
 Are all partakers of my pantry.
 They're at this moment in discussion
 On poor De Staël's late dissolution.
 Her book, they say, was in advance—
 Pray Heaven, she tell the truth of France !
 Thus run our time and tongues away.—
 But, to return, sir, to your play :
 Sorry, sir, but I can not deal,
 Unless 't were acted by O'Neill. 70
 My hands so full, my head so busy,
 I'm almost dead, and always dizzy ;
 And so, with endless truth and hurry,
 Dear Doctor, I am yours,

JOHN MURRAY.

QUESTIONS

A.

What sort of play is Dr. Polidori's, and what is Murray supposed to think of it ?

B.

1. Compare this with *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Is its intention the same ? Which do you prefer ? Why ?

2. What do you know of Gifford and Murray ? Where else does Byron mention them ?

C.

Find out from an encyclopædia what you can of the writers and writings mentioned in the poem. 1

EPITAPH FOR WILLIAM PITT

WITH death doom'd to grapple,
 Beneath this cold slab, he
 Who lied in the Chapel
 Now lies in the Abbey.

STANZAS

WHEN a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
 Let him combat for that of his neighbours ;
 Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
 And get knock'd on the head for his labours.

To do good to mankind is the chivalrous plan,
 And is always as nobly required ;
 Then battle for freedom wherever you can,
 And, if not shot or hang'd, you'll get knighted.

EPIGRAM

THE world is a bundle of hay,
 Mankind are the asses who pull ;
 Each tugs it a different way,
 And the greatest of all is John Bull.

QUESTIONS

B.

Wherein lies the sting of each of these three pieces ?

C.

1. Do they suggest any further link with Pope ?
2. Show how Byron in practice lived up to the second of these epigrams.*

From DON JUAN, Canto I

I WANT a hero : an uncommon want,
 When every year and month sends forth a new one,
 Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
 The age discovers he is not the true one ;
 Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
 I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan—
 We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
 Sent to the devil somewhat ere his time.

Vernon, the butcher Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke,
 Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe, 10
 Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
 And fill'd their sign-posts then, like Wellesley now ;
 Each in their turn like Banquo's monarchs stalk,
 Followers of fame, " nine farrow " of that sow :-
 France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumourier
 Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.

Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
 Petion, Cloutz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette,
 Were French, and famous people, as we know ;
 And there were others, scarce forgotten yet, 20
 Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Desaix, Moreau,
 With many of the military set,
 Exceedingly remarkable at times,
 But not at all adapted to my rhymes.

Nelson was once Britannia's god of war,
 And still should be so, but the tide is turn'd ;
 There's no more to be said of Trafalgar,
 'T is with our hero quietly inurn'd ;
 Because the army's grown more popular,
 At which the naval people are concern'd ; 30
 Besides, the prince is all for the land-service,
 Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.

Brave men were living before Agamemnon
 And since, exceeding valorous and sage,
 A good deal like him too, though quite the same none ;
 But then they shone not on the poet's page,
 And so have been forgotten :—I condemn none,
 But can't find any in the present age
 Fit for my poem (that is, for my new one) ;
 So, as I said, I'll take my friend Don Juan. 40

Most epic poets plunge " in medias res "
 (Horace makes this the heroic turnpike road),
 And then your hero tells, whene'er you please,
 What went before—by way of episode,
 While seated after dinner at his ease,
 Beside his mistress in some soft abode,
 Palace, or garden, paradise, or cavern,
 Which serves the happy couple for a tavern.

That is the usual method, but not mine—
 My way is to begin with the beginning ; 50
 The regularity of my design
 Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning,
 And therefore I shall open with a line
 (Although it cost me half an hour in spinning)
 Narrating somewhat of Don Juan's father,
 And also of his mother, if you'd rather.

In Seville was he born, a pleasant city,
 Famous for oranges and women—he
 Who has not seen it will be much to pity,
 So says the proverb—and I quite agree ; 60
 Of all the Spanish towns is none more pretty,
 Cadiz perhaps—but that you soon may see ;—
 Don Juan's parents lived beside the river,
 A noble stream, and call'd the Guadalquivir.

A little curly-headed, good-for-nothing,
 And mischief-making monkey from his birth ;
 His parents ne'er agreed except in doting
 Upon the most unquiet imp on earth ;
 Instead of quarrelling, had they been but both in
 Their senses, they'd have sent young master forth 70
 To school, or had him soundly whipp'd at home,
 To teach him manners for the time to come.

My poem's epic, and is meant to be
 Divided in twelve books ; each book containing,
 With love, and war, a heavy gale at sea,
 A list of ships, and captains, and kings reigning,
 New characters ; the episodes are three :
 A panoramic view of hell's in training,
 After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
 So that my name of Epic's no misnomer. 80

All these things will be specified in time,
 With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
 The *Vade Mecum* of the true sublime,
 Which makes so many poets, and some fools :
 Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of rhyme,
 Good workmen never quarrel with their tools ;
 I've got new mythological machinery,
 And very handsome supernatural scenery.

There's only one slight difference between
 Me and my epic brethren gone before, 90
 And here the advantage is my own, I ween ;
 (Not that I have not several merits more,
 But this will more peculiarly be seen) ;
 They so embellish, that 't is quite a bore
 Their labyrinth of fables to thread through,
 Whereas this story's actually true.

If any person doubt it, I appeal
 To history, tradition, and to facts,
 To newspapers, whose truth all know and feel,
 To plays in five, and operas in three acts ; 100
 All these confirm my statement a good deal,
 But that which more completely faith exacts
 Is, that myself, and several now in Seville,
 Saw Juan's last elopement with the devil.

If ever I should condescend to prose,
 I'll write poetical commandments, which
 Shall supersede beyond all doubt all those
 That went before ; in these I shall enrich
 My text with many things that no one knows,
 And carry precept to the highest pitch : 110
 I'll call the work " Longinus o'er a Bottle,
 Or, Every Poet his *own* Aristotle."

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope ;
 Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey ;
 Because the first is crazed beyond all hope,
 The second drunk, the third so quaint and mouthy ;
 With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,
 And Campbell's Hippocrene is somewhat drouthy :
 Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers, nor
 Commit—flirtation with the muse of Moore. 120

QUESTIONS

A.

1. What reasons does Byron give for choosing Don Juan as his hero ?
2. What do you learn of his early life ?

B.

1. Compare the opening of *Childe Harold*. What do the differences suggest ? Supposing that they are both autobiographical poems, what light will this comparison throw on Byron's life and character ?
2. What kind of poem does the poet say he is going to write ? How does he compare it with others of the same kind ?

3. How does he make use of this opening for satirical purposes ?
4. Do you think Byron would have had any difficulty in fitting these names with rhymes ?
5. What is the reference in lines 5 and 6 of Stanza II ? Where else does Byron write of fame, and what are his views ?
6. Is mockery one of Byron's natural characteristics ? Discuss the part it plays in his writing.

C.

1. Have you heard of Don Juan "sent to the devil somewhat ere his time" ? What does it mean ?
2. Analyse the metre of the poem. In what other poems does Byron use it ? Compare his use of it with Keats's.
3. What is specially appropriate in the description of Moore, Crabbe and Campbell ? ^{20, 24}
4. What would you expect Byron to admire in the poets he commends ? ²⁰
- *5. What in Milton's *Paradise Lost* corresponds to the method described in lines 41-48 and 73-80 ? Is Byron's description just, so far as you can judge from your knowledge of great epic writers ? Does Shakespeare ever use this method in his plays ? ^{12, 13}
- *6. Can you discover anything about Longinus, Aristotle, and the poetical commandments "that went before" ?

From DON JUAN, Canto II

Juan embark'd—the ship got under way,
 The wind was fair, the water passing rough ;
 A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
 As I, who've cross'd it oft, know well enough ;
 And standing upon the deck, the dashing spray
 Flies in one's face, and makes it weather-tough :
 And there he stood to take, and take again,
 His first—perhaps his last—farewell of Spain.

I can't but say it is an awkward sight
 To see one's native land receding through
 The growing waters ; it unmans one quite,
 Especially when life is rather new :

I recollect Great Britain's coast looks white,
 But almost every other country's blue,
 When gazing on them, mystified by distance,
 We enter on our nautical existence.

So Juan stood, bewilder'd on the deck :

The wind sung, cordage strain'd, and sailors swore,
 And the ship creak'd, the town became a speck,

From which away so fair and fast they bore, 20
 The best of remedies is a beef-steak

Against sea-sickness : try it, sir, before
 You sneer, and I assure you this is true,
 For I have found it answer—so may you.

Don Juan stood, and, gazing from the stern,

Beheld his native Spain receding far :
 First partings form a lesson hard to learn,

Even nations feel this when they go to war ;
 There is a sort of unexpressed concern,

A kind of shock that sets one's heart ajar : 3
 At leaving even the most unpleasant people
 And places, one keeps looking at the steeple.

* * * * *

His suite consisted of three servants and

A tutor, the licentiate Pedrillo,
 Who several languages did understand,

But now lay sick and speechless on his pillow,
 And, rocking in his hammock, long'd for land,

His headache being increased by every billow ;
 And the waves oozing through the port-hole made
 His berth a little damp, and him afraid.

'T was not without some reason, for the wind

Increased at night, until it blew a gale ;
 And though 't was not much to a naval mind,
 Some landsmen would have look'd a little pale,

For sailors are, in fact, a different kind :

At sunset they began to take in sail,
For the sky show'd it would come on to blow,
And carry away, perhaps, a mast or so.

At one o'clock the wind with sudden shift

Threw the ship right into the trough of the sea, 50
Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,
Started the stern-post, also shatter'd the
Whole of her stern-frame, and, ere she could lift
Herself from out her present jeopardy,
The rudder tore away : 't was time to sound
The pumps, and there were four feet water found.

One gang of people instantly was put

Upon the pumps, and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what not ;
But they could not come at the leak as yet ; 60
At last they did get at it really, but
Still their salvation was an even bet :
The water rush'd through in a way quite puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets, bales of muslin,

Into the opening ; but all such ingredients

Would have been vain, and they must have gone down,
Despite of all their efforts and expedients,

But for the pumps ; I'm glad to make them known
To all the brother tars who may have need hence,
For fifty tons of water were upthrown 70
By them per hour, and they had all been undone,
But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.

* * * * *

Then came the carpenter, at last, with tears

In his rough eyes, and told the captain, he
Could do no more : he was a man in years,
And long had voyaged through many a stormy sea,

And if he wept at length, they were not fears
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and children,—
Two things for dying people quite bewildering.

80

The ship was evidently settling now
Fast by the head ; and, all distinction gone,
Some went to prayers again, and made a vow
Of candles to their saints—but there were none
To pay them with ; and some look'd o'er the bow ;
Some hoisted out the boats ; and there was one
That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damn'd—in his confusion.

Some lash'd them in their hammocks ; some put on
Their best clothes, as if going to a fair ;
Some cursed the day on which they saw the sun,
And gnash'd their teeth, and, howling, tore their hair ;
And others went on as they had begun,
Getting the boats out, being well aware,
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.

90

The worst of all was, that in their condition,
Having been several days in great distress,
'T was difficult to get out such provision
As now might render their long suffering less :
Men, even when dying, dislike inanition ;
Their stock was damaged by the weather's stress :
Two casks of biscuit, and a keg of butter,
Were all that could be thrown into the cutter.

100

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injured by the wet ;
Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so ;
Six flasks of wine ; and they contrived to get
A portion of their beef up from below,
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,

110

But scarce enough to serve them for a luncheon—
Then there was rum, eight gallons in a puncheon.

* * * * *

'T was twilight, and the sunless day went down
Over the waste of waters ; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose the frown
Of one whose hate is mask'd but to assail.
Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was shown,
And grimly darkled o'er the faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep : twelve days had Fear
Been their familiar, and now Death was here.

120

Some trial had been making at a raft,
With little hope in such a rolling sea,
A sort of thing at which one would have laugh'd,
If any laughter at such times could be,
Unless with people who too much have quaff'd,
And have a kind of wild and horrid glee,
Half epileptical, and half hysterical :—
Their preservation would have been a miracle

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hencoops, spars,
And all things, for a chance, had been cast loose,
That still could keep afloat the struggling tars,

130

For yet they strove, although of no great use :
There was no light in heaven but a few stars,
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their crews ;
She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And, going down head foremost—sunk, in short.

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell—

Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave,—
Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful yell,

As eager to anticipate their grave ;
And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,

140

And down she suck'd with her the whirling wave,
Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.

And first one universal shriek there rush'd
 Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
 Of echoing thunder ; and then all was hush'd,
 Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
 Of billows ; but at intervals there gush'd,
 Accompanied with a convulsive splash,
 A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
 Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

* * * *

Juan got into the long-boat, and there
 Contrived to help Pedrillo to a place ;
 It seem'd as if they had exchanged their care,
 For Juan wore the magisterial face
 Which courage gives, while poor Pedrillo's pair
 Of eyes were crying for their owner's case :
 Battista, though, (a name call'd shortly Tita)
 Was lost by getting at some aqua-vita.

* * * *

A small old spaniel,—which had been Don José's,
 His father's, whom he loved, as ye may think,
 For on such things the memory reposes
 With tenderness—stood howling on the brink,
 Knowing, (dogs have such intellectual noses !)
 No doubt, the vessel was about to sink ;
 And Juan caught him up, and ere he stepp'd
 Off, threw him in, then after him he leap'd.

* * * *

But man is a carnivorous production,
 And must have meals, at least one meal a day ;
 He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction,
 But, like the shark and tiger, must have prey ;
 Although his anatomical construction
 Bears vegetables, in a grumbling way,
 Your labouring people think beyond all question,
 Beef, veal, and mutton, better for digestion.

And thus it was with this our hapless crew ;
For on the third day there came on a calm,
And though at first their strength it might renew,
And lying on their weariness like balm, 180
Lull'd them like turtles sleeping on the blue
Of ocean, when they woke they felt a qualm,
And fell all ravenously on their provision,
Instead of hoarding it with due precision.

The consequence was easily foreseen—
They ate up all they had, and drank their wine,
In spite of all remonstrances, and then
On what, in fact, next day were they to dine ?
They hoped the wind would rise, these foolish men !
And carry them to shore ; these hopes were fine, 190
But as they had but one oar, and that brittle,
It would have been more wise to save their victual.

The fourth day came, but not a breath of air,
And Ocean slumber'd like an unwean'd child :
The fifth day, and their boat lay floating there,
The sea and sky were blue, and clear, and mild—
With their one oar (I wish they had had a pair)
What could they do ? and hunger's rage grew wild :
So Juan's spaniel, spite of his entreating,
Was kill'd, and portion'd out for present eating. 200

On the sixth day they fed upon his hide,
And Juan, who had still refused, because
The creature was his father's dog that died,
Now feeling all the vulture in his jaws,
With some remorse received (though first denied)
As a great favour one of the fore-paws,
Which he divided with Pedrillo, who
Devour'd it, longing for the other too.

* * * * *

As they drew nigh the land, which now was seen

Unequal in its aspect here and there, 210

They felt the freshness of its growing green,

That waved in forest-tops, and smooth'd the air,
And fell upon their glazed eyes like a screen

From glistening waves, and skies so hot and bare—
Lovely seem'd any object that should sweep
Away the vast, salt, dread, eternal deep.

The shore look'd wild, without a trace of man,

And girt by formidable waves ; but they
Were mad for land, and thus their course they ran,
Though right ahead the roaring breakers lay : 220
A reef between them also now began

To show its boiling surf and bounding spray,
But finding no place for their landing better,
They ran the boat for shore,—and upset her.

But in his native stream, the Guadalquivir,

Juan to lave his youthful limbs was wont ;
And having learnt to swim in that sweet river,
Had often turn'd the art to some account :
A better swimmer you could scarce see ever,
He could, perhaps, have pass'd the Hellespont, 230
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.

So here, though faint, emaciated, and stark,

He buoy'd his boyish limbs, and strove to ply
With the quick wave, and gain, ere it was dark,
The beach which lay before him, high and dry :
The greatest danger here was from a shark,
That carried off his neighbour by the thigh ;
As for the other two, they could not swim,
So nobody arrived on shore but him. 240

QUESTIONS

A.

1. Describe the storm and shipwreck.
2. Who was Pedrillo? What do you know of him?

B.

1. Make a diary of events day by day.
2. Is the confusion of the shipwreck well described? Which lines best suggest it?
3. Illustrate the mixture of styles. What use does Byron make of bathos? Is it a form of humour you admire greatly? Why?
4. Which lines do you consider most amusing? Which are too satirical to be amusing?
5. What is Byron ridiculing in lines 81-96?
6. What merit has this part of Don Juan as a serious narrative and description? Illustrate your answer by referring to the text.
7. Does Byron show the same power of expressing states of mind and emotion that we have noticed before? Where?
8. In what way has his view of life and mankind changed since the time of *Childe Harold* (Canto I)? Do you welcome the change? If neither attitude satisfies you, suggest a happier one.
9. Does Don Juan remind you most of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, *Manfred*, or *Childe Harold*? Why?
10. To what extent is Byron mocking or serious in this poem?
11. Compare this later style of Byron with that of his earlier poems. Notice particularly regularity of metre and pause, rhymes, figures of speech and other general characteristics.

C.

1. Compare Byron's skill in rhyming with that of Browning, W. S. Gilbert, Hood. What do these writers achieve by their quaint and far-fetched rhymes? How does this affect the style of their work? ¹⁵
2. Compare the situation of the Ancient Mariner with that of these shipwrecked sailors? Which description do you prefer and why? Which grips your attention best, and which suggests the most real horror? ¹⁶
3. What do you know of mock heroic? Give examples of it from Don Juan. Compare *Don Quixote*, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, *The Rape of the Lock*.¹⁷
- *4. Is it usually a successful form of literature? Is it here? What are its merits and its failings?
- *5. Do you know any other author with such a mixture of styles as Byron?

THE ISLES OF GREECE

(From Don Juan, Canto III)

I

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece !
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,—
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung !
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse ;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' " Islands of the Blest."

3

The mountains look on Marathon—
And Marathon looks on the sea ;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free ;
For, standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis ;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations ;—all were his !
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set where were they ?

5

And where are they ? and where art thou,
 My country ? On thy voiceless shore
 The heroic lay is tuneless now—
 The heroic bosom beats no more !
 And must thy lyre, so long divine,
 Degenerate into hands like mine ?

30

6

'T is something, in the dearth of fame,
 Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
 To feel at least a patriot's shame,
 Even as I sing, suffuse my face ;
 For what is left the poet here ?
 For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

7

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest ?
 Must *we* but blush ?—Our fathers bled.
 Earth ! render back from out thy breast
 A remnant of our Spartan dead !
 Of the three hundred grant but three,
 To make a new Thermopylæ !

40

8

What, silent still ? and silent all ?
 Ah ! no ;—the voices of the dead
 Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
 And answer, " Let one living head,
 But one arise,—we come, we come ! "
 'T is but the living who are dumb.

9

In vain—in vain ; strike other chords ;
 Fill high the cup with Samian wine !
 Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,

50

And shed the blood of Scio's vine !
Hark ! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal !

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet ;
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone ?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one ?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave ?

60

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
We will not think of themes like these !
It made Anacreon's song divine ;
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant ; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend ;
That tyrant was Miltiades !
Oh ! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind !
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

70

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore ;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells :
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells ;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

80

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine ;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

90

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep ;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die :
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine !

QUESTIONS .

A.

What is the writer's feeling about modern Greece ?

B.

1. What is the metre and rhyme arrangement of the poem ? Why is it made to differ from the rest of *Don Juan* ? In what ways is it well suited to the subject ?
2. Show how the poem works up to a climax. How is the last line made so forcible and effective ?
3. Is the passionate enthusiasm of this poem sincere ? Why do you think so ? How does Byron suggest enthusiasm for the liberty of Greece ?

C.

1. Does anything in the life of Byron justify this apparent enthusiasm for the freedom of Greece ?
- *2. Compare the way in which Byron expresses the spirit of ancient Greece with its expression in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* of Keats.¹¹
- *3. What are the characteristic qualities of an ode, and to what extent is this an ode.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Scott says : " As various as Shakespeare himself, while managing his pen with the careless and negligent ease of a man of quality." Examine and discuss this description of Byron.
2. Give examples from Byron's poems of lyrical, epic, melo-dramatic, and didactic passages.
3. Would you consider variety one of Byron's claims to be considered great ? Why ? Compare the achievement of Dryden, and of Scott.^{2, 3, 21}
4. Write a short essay in answer to this question—" To what extent was the work of Byron affected by the circumstances of his life ? "
- *5. Swinburne says : " Byron rarely wrote anything either worthless or faultless " Is this true ? Could you apply this criticism to either Wordsworth, Keats or Coleridge ? Why ?
6. Trace the influence of the French Revolution on Byron. Compare its effect on any other poets you know.
- *7. What influence has Byron had abroad ? Account for this.
8. Compare him with Dryden, Chaucer and Scott as a story-teller.^{4, 5, 21}
- *9. Byron has been accused of many faults of style ; bombast, matter-of-factness, false sentimentality. Discuss these charges.
- *10. How far can you apply the words classical, romantic or both to Byron's poetry ?

NOTES

PAGE

- 1 *Childe Harold* : i.e. Byron himself.
- 3 *feere* : companion.
- 8 *sound of revelry* : on the night before Waterloo a ball was given at Brussels.
- 9 *Evan's* : Sir Evan Cameron.
- 9 *Donald's* : Donald Cameron, the "gentle Lochiel" of the forty-five. See Campbell's *Lochiel's Warning*.
- 10 *Howard* : an English officer, related to Byron and killed at Waterloo.
- 12 *Drachenfels* : the castle of Drachenfels stands on the highest summit of "the Seven Mountains," overlooking the Rhine.
- 20 *Dacian* : Dacia was a Roman province roughly equal to the modern Rumania.
- 22 *Bonniward* (1496-1570) defended the cause of his native Geneva against the Duke of Savoy. He was captured, and was imprisoned for six years (1530-1536) in the castle of Chillon on the north side of the Lake of Geneva (Lake Lemman).
- 45 *werst* : a Russian measure of distance, about 3,500 feet.
- 65 *Miller* : Joe Miller (1684-1738), an actor, after whose death a book called *Joe Miller's Jests* was published. See *Encyclopædia Britannica*.
- 65 *Jeffrey* : Francis Jeffrey, the critic (1773-1850) and editor of the *Edinburgh Review*.
- 65 *Lambe* : an Edinburgh Reviewer.
- 66 *Gifford* : William Gifford, satirist and critic (1757-1826).
- 66 *Pye* : Poet Laureate from 1790 to 1813 and the object of much ridicule. See Byron's *Vision of Judgment*, xcii.
- 67 *Murray with his Miller* : *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was published by Messrs. Constable, Murray and Miller.
- 68 *Berkley ballads* : Southey's *The Old Woman of Berkley*.
- 73 *Prince Ferdinand* : the Duke of Brunswick, victor of Minden (1759).
- 73 *Vernon . . . Howe* : commanders in the Seven Years' War or in the War of American Independence.
- 73 *Barnave . . . Lafayette* : French revolutionary politicians and leaders.
- 73 *Joubert . . . Moreau* : French commanders in the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.
- 86 *Scian . . . Teian muse* : Homer . . . Anacreon.

LIST OF BOOKS SUGGESTED

The figures refer to those placed *after* questions headed "C."

- ¹ Byron : Poetical Works (*Oxford Standard Authors*).
- ² Nichol : Byron (*English Men of Letters*).
- ³ Spenser : Faerie Queene.
- ⁴ Via Lyrica.*
- ⁵ Wordsworth : Lyrical Ballads.*
- ⁶ Wordsworth : Poetical Works (*Oxford Standard Authors*).
- ⁶ Swift : Gulliver's Travels.
- ⁷ Pope : Poems.
- ⁸ Dryden : Fables.*
- ⁹ Scott : Poems.
- ¹⁰ Coleridge : Selected Poems and Prose.*
- ¹¹ Keats : Selected Poems.*
- ¹² Shakespeare : Plays and Poems.
- ¹³ Milton : Paradise Lost, I.—III.*
- ¹⁴ Shelley : Poetical Works (*Oxford Standard Authors*).
- ¹⁵ Browning : Poems.
- ¹⁶ Cowper : John Gilpin.
- ¹⁷ Beaumont : Knight of the Burning Pestle.*
- ¹⁸ The Bible (Authorised Version).
- ¹⁹ Tennyson : Poems.
- ²⁰ Ward : English Poets.
- ²¹ Dryden : Poetical Works (*Oxford Standard Authors*).
- ²² Southey : Poems.
- ²³ Ruskin : Modern Painters, Volume III.
- ²³ English Critical Essays—Nineteenth Century (*The World's Classics*).
- ²⁴ Crabbe : The Borough.

* In the *Socrates Booklets* series.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

